

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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61

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 SS-15 L-03 INR-07 SP-02 /045 W

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P 242100Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 293

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 0807

STADIS//////////

FOR HEAVNER, ARA/CAR, FROM CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAGR, PFOR, JM

SUBJECT: JAMAICAN RICE QUOTA

1. AS FOLLOW-UP TO OUR FRIDAY TELEPHONE CONVERSATION I TOOK UP RICE QUESTION WITH GORDON WELLS (PM'S PERMANENT SECRETARY) MORNING FEBRUARY 24. ALTHOUGH WELLS ALREADY AWARE IN BROAD TERMS OF THE ISSUE AND ITS BACKGROUND, I DESCRIBED OUR PAST APPROACHES HERE AND IN WASHINGTON AND STRESSED IMPORTANCE EARLY GOJ ACTION IF SECTION 301 PROBLEMS TO BE AVOIDED. ALSO URGED THAT ANY LICENSING BE FROM 4,000 TO 6,000 METRIC TONS. WELLS PROMISED TO GET BACK TO ME IN NEXT COUPLE OF DAYS. HE SAID ONE POSSIBILITY THAT OCCURS TO HIM IS TO LICENSE A QUANTITY SMALLER THAN THAT REQUESTED COUPLED WITH A COMMITMENT TO REVIEW JAMAICA'S RICE REQUIREMENTS AT MID-YEAR WITH A VIEW TO POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL LICENSING.

2. WELLS DID NOTE THAT IMPORTATION U.S. RICE IS A MAJOR POLITICAL AND TRADE PROBLEM IN THAT (A) GOJ HAD ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS BEEN SEVERELY CRITICIZED BY CARICOM PARTNERS FOR PAST IMPORTS U.S. RICE; (B) U.S. RICE REPRESENTS HEAVIER DRAIN ON VERY SMALL FOREIGN EXCHANGE HOLDINGS; AND (C) COST OF U.S. RICE SUFFICIENTLY HIGHER TO REQUIRE A TWO-TIERED RICE PRICING FORMULA -- A DIFFICULT PROPOSITION UNDER CURRENT PRICE INDEXING ARRANGEMENTS.

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DORRANCE

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